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## DAILY NOTEBOOKS

Mary Kay Vollmer Elementary School

West Henrietta, New York

"Daily Notebooks" began at Vollmer Elementary School in fall of 1996 when the school opened. They provide daily, on-going communication between home and school and school and home. Every teacher has been sending home daily communications through the notebooks for the past two school years.

Although telephone calls and meetings with parents will always be necessary (and desired), the notebook practice allows parents and teachers to get to know one another, to exchange ideas, and to work together for the benefit of the child. Parents know when their child learned something new, made a new friend, or had a hard day. Teachers know when children come to school without enough sleep, with a worry from home, or with a terrific experience to share in school. Kids know that their parents and teachers really care about them, are working together, and that it's not parent against teacher.

While this practice costs little (just the price of a spiral notebook per child), it reaps big returns. It's a perfect example of how communication can truly be effective.

Some challenges may include the following: children misplacing notebooks; children forgetting notebooks at home; substitutes not following the practice. Currently, Vollmer School has only about 50 students. The teacher/child ratios are excellent, but in a "regular" school with a "regular" grade level, the ratio may be 1:25 students. This would be extremely time-consuming to complete 25 notebooks daily.

When Vollmer becomes a full elementary school in the 1999-2000 school year, it may be necessary to modify the plan by sending home a limited number of notebooks on specified days.

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